

KEYNOTE ADDRESS YAB PRIME MINISTER: THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS 2025

By : DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM

Venue : SUNWAY RESORT HOTEL, PETALING JAYA SELANGOR

Date : 28/08/2025

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM

PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

AT

**THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT OF RELIGIOUS
LEADERS 2025**

28th AUGUST 2025 (THURSDAY) 2:00PM

SUNWAY RESORT HOTEL, PETALING JAYA SELANGOR

Assalamualaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh dan salam sejahtera.

Alhamdulillahil lazeee anzala ‘alaa ‘abdihil kitaaba,

wa lam yaj’al lahoo ‘iwajaa,

wa nusalli ala rasoolihil kareem,

wa ‘ala alihi wasahbihi ajma’in.

Rakan-rakan yang saya muliakan, Malaysia sekali lagi mendapat penghormatan kerana diberikan kesempatan oleh badan Islam Sedunia, “rabitaala wal islami” bersama dengan JAKIM, menganjurkan satu sidang penting, mengangkat martabat, peranan para ulama, sarjana dari semua agama utama dalam negara kita dan dunia untuk membahaskan isu-isu semasa.

Peranan ulama dan sarjana, dan pemimpin agama tidak lagi terbatas kepada soal-soal yang terkait dengan hukum hakam negara mereka, agama mereka tetapi juga tentang kemaslahatan sejagat.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Yang Berhormat Senator Dato’ Setia Dr. Haji Mohd Na’im bin

Mokhtar,

Minister in The Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs);

My dear brother, Maali Sheikh Dato' Seri Dr. Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Al Issa,

Al-Amīn al Amm, Rabitah al-'alam al-Islami (Secretary General Muslim World League);

Some very prominent leaders, Ayatollah Alireza Arafī;

Dr. David Bahn;

Swami Paramatmaanda; and many others which I will fail because I will not be able to mention every name, but these are commendable renowned leaders of their own faith.

1. On behalf of the Rabitah al-'alam al-Islami and more so the government of Malaysia, I welcome you as friends, as brothers to this country and must express my profound gratitude and appreciation for your contribution commitment towards peace, justice and humanity.
2. I've listened attentively to Al-Amīn al-Amm, who has expounded brilliantly the purpose motivation of this conference. And as you know, Dr. Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Al Issa has done a great service. And I think, really, I'm compelled to say this that we support this endeavour because not many initiatives of this kind in the world.

3. Today, in the world there's a deficit, there's a decline in trust, there is deficit among political leaders or what is the notion of justice on humanity, on good values. And therefore, the religious leaders will have no choice. We are not giving you a choice. You have to hold the banner. Yes, in the days of imperialism and colonialism religions were used to subjugate communities. But we must not forget the fact that the anti colonial movement, anti imperialist movement were led and started by prominent leaders, religious leaders.
4. Why? Because they believe in peace, they believe in justice, they believe in humanity, they believe in human dignity. No country, no person, no women or children or country should be subjugated under any foreign domination or rule.
5. I am just appealing to religious leaders now to then take up that task. Because in my limited experience in governance, talking to leaders, you see so many contradictions, which I sometimes see this blatant hypocrisy. We talk about democracy, we talk about human rights, we talk about justice, but there's no democracy, no human rights, no justice, when you talk with the others.
6. Where else do I now appeal? I appeal to the religious leaders. Because you understand the meaning of peace. You are committed that all religions want to promote humanity. Yes, there are differences. I am a Muslim, I practice Islam. But, I also know that in my religion we talk about 'Rahmatan lil alamin', the compassion towards everyone. Not only human beings, with the animal kingdom, the plantation, the

forest and the jungles to be protected, to keep the equilibrium and balance of 'Ummatan wasatan.

7. And I know the meaning of 'lita'arafu' which means not only tolerance, you see the Islamic term, connotes a more profound understanding of learning, appreciating, accepting the difference to one another. And how do you 'lita'arafu'? Only by knowing, by learning, by appreciating, by tolerating. And you have to play that role.
8. Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Al Issa said about the role internationally, but also the role to protect the rights of minorities. And it covers all countries. And is a challenge here in Malaysia. I'm in a country where over 60% Muslims, abundant number of Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and some 'enemies' not enemies, 'nemies. And we have to deal, not necessarily to satisfy or easily can satisfy everyone, but we have to engage. Every policy will have to be discussed, but more importantly in the principle of governance. And I learned from the writings of for example the Maqasid Syariah of Al-Shatibi in Mawafakat about some of the principles which include protecting life, property, honor and dignity. And this covers of course every single human being, men, women, youth and children.
9. I need to emphasize this point, excellencies and brothers and sisters and my learned scholars, religious leaders, because I think in recent history we are facing more graver challenge.

10. Sometimes we talk about differences between religions. You don't realize all religions must unite at least to create this understanding against those who reject any faith and values. All religious leaders must unite and defend what humanity is and what belief is. We must unite against the forces that reject faith altogether. The extreme laïcité and extreme fundamentalists. Not only religion, they're also fundamentalists among the secularists, who cannot even listen, hear the word religion or faith. It's not just Islamophobia. If you read for example Samuel Huntington's thesis, 'Clash of civilizations', all the rest, the Confucianes, the Hindus, the Muslims all quite irrelevant and we have no choice but must clash.
11. I often hear to my students, my friends encourage them to read this one great Christian Arab scholar, Edward Said, a great champion for the Palestinian cause and anti-colonialism voice when he said it's not a clash of civilization, it is a clash of ignorance.
12. It is a new form of Jahiliyyah, no understanding what is truth what is right, what is just, what is human and therefore, they may hate another religion, you ask them, they know nothing about it. They may hate other societies and cultures and civilization there is no respect for it.
13. So, I think this is a great initiative ya akhi, and I must commend you for that and I would only use this to appeal to religious leaders to be more assertive in their views.

14. Of course, most of you will say well, it's not partisan politics, fair, but on justice on values, on encouraging understanding and respect that is universal and that must be strongly promoted.
15. Al-Amin Al-Amm my colleague, I call him Al Ustaz Al Adib referred to the issue Gaza, of course it's painful because what does it show? Politics suicide, but it shows that the international community have lost its zeal. His passion for justice humanity. For the last 50, 60 years we've been fighting against colonization, against what is considered in French is "Explotaseon harlour parlour", exploitation of men by men, sometimes by man by women, sometimes woman by man, whatever. I mean I grew up in the university learning this, anti colonization, no colonial power should impose. I learned that, you know there should be a human, approach to things justice, equality. I learned about the French Revolution of liberty, galaty, fraternity, now all these are lost.
16. So, in Gaza it's a classic example. I mean every day you see babies being killed, houses and people being bombed and there will be some voices of sympathy, "yes, we've considered this", "yes there's a solution". I mean what on earth is happening in this world? Why is there such tolerance? What is our religion teaching us? Where is the voice of conscience that stems from our faith and moral values?
17. Now I am not casting blame to any particular source, but certainly we have to rise up and the religious leaders have to be more assertive in their views.

18. So, thank you again to Rabitah al-‘alam al-Islam, to JAKIM and more profoundly to all the great religious leaders who are present here today, all the way from Saudi Arabia to Iran, to United States of America, you see interesting. I can mention Iran and the United States of America, because they are here, assembled today which is, which is rare.

19. This is the place where you engage as human beings as religious leaders, and I commend of course the organizers for being able to bring them together and just talk. We can't solve a one-thousand-year-old problem. People ask, I was in parliament just now, I came here from the parliament, you see. "Oh, they are you know, the Sunnis or Saudi, the Shiah so present", you see some are curious. I said yeah, "why can't they meet and talk?" I can't solve all the problems, I'm not here with such an authority to be able to solve all the problems, but at least you can see from the Sheikhu Azhari – Dr Nazir Mohammed Ayyad representative to you know all the leaders here and the Hindus and Buddhist, some very pronounced name. I checked; my staff showed me some great prominent religious leaders of all faith and denominations are here. This is a unique experience, Wallahi Al Azim, use it to the best our ability to try to influence the direction of where my country, my region and the world is going.

20. We are fortunate here Malaysia multiracial but very peaceful. I believe in democracy, freedom but I draw the line. You create havoc and preach hatred against any other race or religion, will go hard on you, because you will destroy the very fabric of this country.

21. When we heard some of our brothers and sisters in Thailand and Cambodia started have differences, started shooting, then we as great friends of both of these countries, immediately called appealed brought them here, let us talk quickly, we are not like the rest. Alhamdulillah, we maintain peace very quickly in matter of days.

22. And may Allah guide you. Thank you very much, jazakumullah khairan kathira, nandri vanakkam, what else? Xièxie.

Assalamulaikumualaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

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Source: <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2025/08/keynote-address-yab-prime-minister-the-second-international-summit-of-religious-leaders-2025-2/>